

TO: Administrator Pruitt
FROM: OCIR, OPA
CC: Ryan Jackson
RE: Georgia Travel (July 7th)
DATE: July 7, 2017

Purpose: You and Secretary Sonny Perdue are scheduled to tour the Gully Branch Tree Farm in Cochran, Georgia. The focus of your visit will be on the benefits of EPA's partnership with local organizations to promote stewardship in local schools. After the tour of the farm, you and Secretary Perdue will deliver brief remarks to local businesses, educators, 4H students and Future Farmers of America members.

Attire: Button down shirt or polo, khakis. Secretary Perdue will be dressed casually.

NOTE: Georgia Project Learning Tree has received two grants from a partnership with the American Forest Foundation and the EPA for educator training. As a result, the funding will enable 45 local elementary school teachers to receive training at Gully Branch Tree Farm in October.

Gully Branch Tree Farm: Earl and Wanda Barrs own and operate the 1,500-acre tree farm in Cochran, Georgia. Gully Branch has been used as one of the state's premier outdoor classrooms since 1994. More than 800 students visit Gully Branch each year as part of forestry education field trips rooted in the American Forest Foundation's Project Learning Tree environmental education program. The farm was named the "2008 Georgia Tree Farm of the Year".

Forestry in Georgia: Ninety-one percent of Georgia's forests, which cover two-thirds of the land area of the state, are privately owned. The majority of that land is owned by tens of thousands of private, non-industrial landowners whose stewardship serves to clean the state's water and air while providing valuable wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation.

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| 6:59AM EST- 8:50 AM EST | <div>Personal Matters / Ex. 6</div> Drive Time to Gully Branch Tree Farm: 2 hours |
| 11:00AM EST | Arrive at Gully Branch Tree Farm <i>11:00 Driving Tour of Gully Branch Tree Farm (closed press)</i> -Tour led by Wanda and Earl Barrs (Owners/Operators) -Participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrator Pruitt• Secretary Perdue <i>12:00 Roundtable Discussion (closed press)</i> -Purpose: to discuss the forestry issues and partnering with EPA and USDA -Participants: |

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|---------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator Pruitt • Secretary Perdue • Earl and Wanda Barrs • Local Farmers and Owners <p><i>1:00 Remarks—Partnering with EPA and USDA (Open to local Georgia Press)</i></p> <p><i>-Speaking Order</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanda and Earl Barrs introduce Secretary Perdue • Secretary Perdue delivers remarks and introduced Administrator Pruitt • Administrator Pruitt delivers remarks • Earl and Wanda Barrs concludes the event • Press will be located at the back of the event. • Secretary Purdue will do a brief media gaggle and would the Administrator to join if willing <p><i>-Audience:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Georgia Extension • Georgia Forestry Commission • Local Famers and Land Owners • Local Educators • Future Farmers of America • 4-H Students |
| 1:45PM | <p>Depart for ATL Airport</p> <p>Drive Time to ATL Airport: 2 Hours</p> |
| 4:47PM EST- 6:45PM EST | <div>Personal Matters / Ex. 6</div> |

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Earl and Wanda Barrs

Earl and Wanda Barrs owners of Gully Branch Tree Farm in Bleckley County, Georgia.

Earl and Wanda's Gully Branch Tree Farm holds a unique spot in the history of the Barrs family. Earl's family first settled the land in the late 1800s. His great-grandparents sharecropped the land and raised their family there. Earl's grandfather, James, was born on that farm. In the 1930s the land was up for sale for nine bales of cotton. Unfortunately, the family was unable to purchase it.

In the mid 1980s, Earl and Wanda were able to purchase 411 acres of the original farmland from a timber company that had purchased the farm in the 1950s. Now, expanded to 1,500 acres, the Tree Farm is a distinctive blend of heritage, venue for education, and personal experience for the Barrs' role as private landowners.

Earl describes Gully Branch as a "work in progress." After acquiring the land from the timber company, the Barrs spent countless hours, endless energy, and ample resources to transform the industrially managed land into an esteemed, family-managed tree farm. Acres of topsoil piled high in windrows from the previous industrial owner was redistributed to yield more productive viewing and wildlife food plots, as well as acres of better quality soils.

Gully Branch is host to a variety of forest stands and soil types, elevations, vegetation, and wildlife. Loblolly pine plantations and natural loblolly and short leaf pine stands, as well as stands of upland and bottomland hardwoods are managed across the tree farm. Ponds are host to catfish, bream, largemouth bass, and grass carp. Above the waters and trees, red-headed woodpeckers, bluebirds, herons, kingfishers, and Canada geese take their respective "birds-eye" view of this well-managed forested land.

Earl and Wanda's "work in progress" also includes influencing better management of woodlands by providing property tours, as well as political involvement, media relations, and taking on leadership assignments with natural resource groups.

If this is not enough, telling the story of Gully Branch should include counting visitors to the Tree Farm. Gully Branch has been used as one of the state's premier outdoor classrooms since 1994. It began that year by hosting 100 seventh graders, and has grown to include some 700 to 900 students annually. Since 1994, more than 6,000 students have visited Gully Branch as part of forestry education field trips rooted in the American Forest Foundation's Project Learning Tree® environmental education program.

As one third grade teacher said, after participating in an educational workshop and field trip to Gully Branch Tree Farm: "This was truly the best workshop I have ever attended . . . what better way to learn than to 'leave no child inside.' Gully Branch Tree Farm was a joy to visit."

As Wanda Barrs points out, "We believe leading follows learning. When we ensure learners of all ages are equipped with the facts, then the opportunity for effective leadership is greatly enhanced."

The National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year awards are sponsored by [Stihl, Inc.](#), the world's leading chain saw manufacturer and a variety of handheld outdoor power equipment.

